PEAKS

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of his Utah hiking books. This makes sense and helps avoid confusion between the two pinnacles.

The more famous Francis Peak is now well-known as a "skymark" in Davis and Morgan counties because of the two radar domes sitting on it.

The peak was named Francis in honor of Esther Charlotte Emily Wiesbroddt Francis, an early pioneer woman who settled in Morgan in 1863. Her expert knowledge of mathematics, particularly calculus, drew many to seek her help. She assisted early surveyors and, among other things, helped organize Morgan City into blocks, lots and streets.

It was customary in early settlements of the West to name a landmark after a person in recognition of services rendered or contributions made. Sometimes a first name was used. In the case of Francis, her last name probably sounded like a better name for the most prominent mountain peak in the area than her first name.

Brigham Young himself is reported to have honored Francis by naming the mountain after her.

Why her name was given to the second-highest peak in the mountain range between Bountiful and Weber Canyon is unclear. Lacking modern equipment, perhaps no one in the 1800s knew the north peak was the highest, or possibly the south peak just looked more spectacular because it was pointed. (The northern Francis Peak is rounded.)

Obviously, South Francis Peak looks much different today, with
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radar towers perched atop it that were not there before the 1960s. Meanwhile, the taller, northern Francis has remained a wilderness. The peak was surveyed at 9,707 feet high in 1955 until a re-measurement in 1991 lowered it by one foot to its current 9,706.

North Francis Peak can be a little difficult to single out, but it is more easily spotted out west, away from the foothills. It is directly east of the Davis Drive-in Theater and has a little knob poking out of its north slope. To the south of it, the mountain skyline dips down several hundred feet to its lowest point between Weber and Farmington canyons.

The original, southern Francis Peak is visited by hundreds of people a year and has a dirt road leading to it. The radar towers have made it one of the only real skymarks in Davis County, especially at night, when they are lighted. This Francis Peak was measured at 9,547 feet and is listed as such on 1955 U.S. Geological Survey maps. Construction on the two radar towers started in July 1958. The pointed peak had to be blasted off to level just over an acre of ground to support the radar facilities.

This construction resulted in a loss of 22,000 cubic yards of material and 32 feet of the peak's height. However, the Geological Survey has since neglected to update the original Francis Peak's elevation and still lists it at 9,547, while the Morgan County Historical Society has done considerable research and correctly lists the height of Francis Peak at 9,51[illegible].

The Geological Survey does not add the height of man-made structures to its elevations. Otherwise, Francis Peak would be higher than ever at approximately 9,600 feet because of the 85-foot-high radar towers. (This still makes its 106 feet lower than North Francis Peak.)

The radar facility became operational in June 1961. When opened, it was the highest radar facility in the nation. Today it is ranked third. Still, some hang glider participants believe it is the highest place in the United States where a person can drive a vehicle to a launch point near the radar towers and where more than a vertical
and where more than a vertical
mile of gliding separates them from Lagoon.

Nearly perpetual snow below the radar towers creates a small "winter playground" in the spring and summer, though this kind of recreation can lead to accidents. For example, a Clinton teenager slid 300 feet down the side of Francis Peak while snowboarding last May and into a rock field, resulting in three fractured vertebrae.

The Morgan County Historical Society contributed information on the original Francis Peak to this story.